DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 418 068 SP 037 858

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TITLE Using Personal Narrative and Storytelling To Promote Reflection and the Development of Teacher Voice in Drama Teacher Education.
PUB DATE 1998-02-26
NOTE 21p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (50th, New Orleans, LA, February 25-28, 1998).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Case Method (Teaching Technique); *Dramatics; Higher Education; *Personal Narratives; Preservice Teacher Education; Secondary Education; *Story Telling; Student Teachers; Student Teaching; Teacher Collaboration; Teaching Methods; Writing Instruction
IDENTIFIERS Voice (Rhetoric)

ABSTRACT

A collaboration by three drama methods professors (two in Canada and one in the United States) provides opportunities for preservice drama education students to: explore the complex issues found in classrooms; examine their own learning about how to teach drama; and discover their own powerful teaching voices and a sense of community. The faculty members achieve this by encouraging personal storytelling in methods classes and student teacher seminars and through the use and development of student written case narratives. The methods class uses cases written by drama student teachers. Students also write commentaries or critiques of some of the cases they have read. Later, as part of the student teaching practicum, the students develop their own case, which is a narrative description of and reflection on their experiences. This paper includes a sample of one of the cases. The professors involved in the collaboration note three advantages to the case study method. First, the case examples are relevant because they are real. Second, the cases provide examples of reflective practice which the students can emulate as they write their cases. Third, the professors benefit as they discuss the project and collaborate. The major problem that students have with the case writing project is time constraints. Despite any limitations, the professors consider case study and case writing processes valuable components of drama teacher preparation. (Contains 18 references.) (SM)

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Using Personal Narrative and Storytelling to Promote Reflection and the Development of Teacher Voice in Drama Teacher Education

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Paper presented for the annual meeting of American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, Feb. 26, 1998. New Orleans, LA.

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Using Personal Narrative and Storytelling to Promote Reflection and the Development of Teacher Voice in Drama Teacher Education

> *Writing my own case study, although stressful, was beneficial to me as it forced me to confront many issues I had faced in my practicum. I am not sure that I would have taken the time to do so otherwise. It is a bit intimidating that others may read and critique my performance, but I hope my experiences will help them.*

This statement was made by a student teacher who had just completed a practicum in a junior high drama class. The student teacher had written a case study describing the student teaching experience and then analyzed the experience based on drama education theory, class discussions from the methods class, and the student's own insight. The student also looked ahead to what might be done differently "the next time" as he/she contemplated his/her emerging sense of drama practice.

Teacher preparation programs seek to develop reflective teachers who can examine and reexamine their knowledge, beliefs, and values about teaching and learning. Such teachers will be empowered as Richert (1992a) describes it because they can act in accordance with what they know and believe. Richert notes further that isolation can stifle the development of teacher voice. Teacher isolation, while problematic for all teachers, is a special concern for those in the arts who can find themselves separated both by curriculum and geography from the main campus. A secondary school drama teacher with a classroom in the auditorium building, for example, might actually be the only teacher in the building.

The barriers to the development of teacher *voice* or the "use of language to explain, describe, question, explore, or challenge" (Richert, 1992a, p. 189), are a special challenge in the preparation of secondary drama teachers. First, the number of students enrolled in drama education certification programs is usually small, sometimes as few as two or three students per year; thereby making it difficult to create a sense of cohort or common identity. Second, drama education students often report feeling marginalized perceiving no place in either colleges of education or in theatre departments (Dynak, 1994). Typically drama education students are advised and mentored by one faculty member house in either a theatre department or in education. Other faculty often take little

interest in drama education students or else do not have the experience or confidence to mentor these students. Generally speaking texts in classroom management, educational psychology, and teaching methods have few examples for students in drama. Similarly, few texts common to drama methods classes refer to education theory. This leads to the third barrier, the student culture in education, especially for drama students, which tends to dismiss the importance of education courses as theory driven and therefore not much use for the "real world" of drama classrooms (Lanier & Little, 1986). Despite all the recent changes in teacher preparation programs, especially the inclusion of more early field experiences, drama education students are still likely to report, "I learned more during my student teaching semester than I ever did in any of my education courses."

This paper describes a collaboration by three drama methods professors--two in Canada and one in the US--to provide opportunities for preservice drama education students to explore the complex issues found in classrooms, to examine their own learning about how to teach drama, and to discover not only their own powerful teaching voices but also a sense of community. We achieve this by encouraging personal storytelling in methods classes and student teacher seminars and through the use and development of student written case narratives. Cases written by drama student teachers are used as a text during the methods class; methods students also write commentaries or critiques of some of the cases they have read. Later as a part of the student teaching practicum, the students develop their own case, a narrative description of and reflection on their experiences. A sample of one of the cases and a commentary are included in this paper to illustrate how we use the cases in the classroom along with a discussion of our reflections on teaching our students the writing process. The paper will also examine what we have found to be both advantageous and problematic in case based teaching.

Stories in Teacher Preparation

Studies of expert teachers (e.g., Berliner, 1986) revealed that experienced teachers had developed elaborate schemas of classroom events which novice teachers did not have. As a result, experts were able to approach diverse classroom situations with a variety of strategies, something

novice teachers could not do. Richert (1992a) explains that this development occurs as knowledge about teaching is constructed and reconstructed and ideas and beliefs once held to be "true" are rejected and reformed over time. Schön (1983) notes that teachers develop a repertoire of theories, practices, knowledge, and values which influence how situations are defined, what is noticed, and the kinds of questions and decisions teachers will form about particular actions. The bulk of teachers' learning comes through continuous action and reflection on everyday problems. Schank (1990) would add that a knowledgeable person also has many stories to tell--stories derived their own experience and from the experiences of others which match or help clarify ones own beliefs.

The experts in Berliner's study were all teachers with at least five years experience. How could novices possibly begin to develop their own expertise in the relatively short period of most teacher preparation programs? Where would preservice teachers get the experiences which increase their stockpile of stories about classroom events? One answer was to create more intensive early field experiences--put preservice teachers in classrooms and let them start "seeing life from the other side of the desk" (Lortie, 1975); couple this observation and participation with discussions that cause students to examine their preconceptions about teaching and learning (Richert, 1992a). Field experiences do have their limitations, however, especially in drama education. For example, there may not be very many schools with exemplary drama programs in grades 7-12 close to the university, or the programs may not be able to offer much diversity in philosophy, curriculum, or even student demographics.

Fortunately field experience can be complimented and augmented by the use of *case studies*. Lee Shulman (1992) defines a *case* as a story, event or text that is an instance of a larger class, an example of a broad category, in other words--a "case-of-something." A case has a narrative, a story, a set of events that unfolds over time in a particular place, usually with human protagonists. These teaching narratives or stories have certain shared characteristics such as a plot with a beginning, a middle, and an end, with perhaps some dramatic tension that must be relieved in some fashion.

Shulman notes that cases can be used for a variety of purposes; among these are teaching

theoretical principles or concepts, precedents for practice, strategies, dispositions, and habits of mind. Cases can be used to develop the particular professional way of thinking characteristic of expert teachers. Judith Shulman (1992) in the introduction to her book Case Methods in Teacher Education sums up one role that cases can play in teacher education:

> Case-based teaching provides teachers with opportunities to analyze situations and make judgments in the messy world of practice, where principles often appear to conflict with one another and no simple solution is possible. (p. xiv)

Judith Shulman maintains that case methods demonstrate to students that "thinking like a teacher" is a creative way of thinking, a process of problem framing and inquiry. The case gives literary detail that shows the student how the teacher's manner and personality, moral quality and intentions, shape his/her interpretation of events. Cases are also useful because of their status as narratives and their contextualization in time and place. They may have more immediate credibility and relevance, promote better transfer from theory to practice, and, therefore, produce better problem solvers and critical thinkers. Students can experience vicariously a far larger number of different situations than would ever be possible through direct personal experience.

Cases can illustrate instances of exemplary practice (Cooper, 1995), thus providing an ideal context to integrate theory and practice. Some cases illustrate typical events in classrooms serving as "narratives designed to promote a discussion of significant issues, portray a variety of teaching strategies and philosophies and highlight the complexity, rationality and flaws in student thinking" (Barnett & Tyson, 1993, p 2). Cases are often constructed specifically to promote problem solving discussions of concern to both preservice and in-service teachers (e.g., Silverman, Welty, & Lyon, 1992).

The most attractive feature of teaching cases is that they are **stories**. They can catch the reader's attention and involve the reader in the world of the case and in the dilemma faced by the teacher and students described in the case. "A story," Hare (1993) notes, "is a powerful and effective way of communicating educational ideas" (p. 20); furthermore, stories provide a context to help the

reader or listener relate what she has heard to what she already knows (Schank, 1990). Methods instructors, for example, often illustrate pedagogical topics with anecdotes from their own practice or from their observations in schools. Certainly the stories in cases written specifically as examples of certain issues or to seek solutions to a specific problem can engage the reader and provoke powerful classroom discussions. But when the stories are first person accounts by peers of real-life events, as are the cases used by these drama methods professors, they are simply more powerful. In teacher education classes where first person narratives are used, spaces are created where lived experiences are shared, uncovered, articulated, interpreted, and reinterpreted (Miller, 1992). Preservice teachers who read, analyze, discuss, and reflect on first person narratives are able to bring to their own practice and emerging teacher voice, a polyphony of other voices.

Personal Storytelling as a Learning Tool

Schank (1990) notes that when a person hears a story, he is thinking of one of his own to tell in return. In other words, when methods students read and discuss cases, experiences they have had often come to mind. Allowing the students to tell their own stories is a vital part of teacher preparation. "Story is a tool for self discovery; stories tell us new things about ourselves that we wouldn't have been as aware of without having told the story" (Atkinson, 1995, p.3). Atkinson goes on to state that stories help demonstrate our "inherent connectedness with others" (p. 4). This sense of community is important to teacher preparation. As Clandinin (1993) notes:

> As we listened to each other's stories, and told our own, we learned to make sense of our teaching practices as expressions of our personal practical knowledge, the knowledge that was embodied in us as persons and was enacted in our classroom practices and in our lives. (p. 1)

It is when preservice teachers engage in discussion about their own practice, that they begin to articulate their own voice. Richert (1992a) furthermore argues that "reflective practice requires [emphasis added] that teachers engage in this conversation" (p. 189). She goes on to state that, "Teachers who talk about what they do and why are able to know what they do and why and to

question themselves as well" (p. 190).

According to Schank (1990) members of a specific culture learn story skeletons typical of that culture. It is important, then, that, as the preservice teachers enter the culture and profession of teaching, the stories they tell promote reflection and teacher empowerment and do not reinforce the traditional culture of schools (e.g., Lortie, 1975). Students should be encouraged to do more than tell just part of the story--the part of it that makes them look good or put upon or someone else look bad. It is important then to avoid what Lortie (1975) called "experience swapping" which tends to promote the traditional culture of schools where teachers often see themselves as victims, helpless to make decisions or control their world outside their own classrooms. The listeners of such stories can probe for more details to get a sense of the complete story. The entire group can look for possible solutions or explanations for events in an effort to put them into context and distance the tellers from what is sometimes an emotionally charged situation. It is important that student teachers also share and analyze stories which describe successful experiences they have had. Richert (1992a) sums up the importance of preservice stories about their emerging practice:

> For student teachers, the opportunity to talk about their actions, their thinking, their beliefs, and their feelings, is part of the process of learning to be a reflective teacher. In the formulation of explanations novice teachers can "come to know" in ways that enable them to enter and participate in both the social and intellectual lives of their new profession. (p. 191)

Clandinin (1993) would add that when this conversation takes place with others, new forms of collaboration begin and a search for a common language commences. The value of a common discourse in drama education comes not from finding "one right way" to teach drama, but from finding that even with many approaches to drama in the classroom, there are issues common to all.

Writing the Cases

When students begin their practicum, they are given this directive for the completion of their own case study:

Describe a significant challenge, incident, concern or issue you have encountered in your practicum and write this as a formal case study.

The students are provided with several focus questions to aid in their description:

What is your concern? When did you first notice it? What specific actions did you take as a result of this concern? What were the differences or discrepancies in the way this situation ended in comparison to the way you had originally intended or thought this situation would end? (Were you surprised with result? Why or why not?) How will this experience influence your future teaching?

We have made the following observations about the case writing process:

Prewriting--teaching the students how to write cases. We have found that students need to identify techniques which will allow them to observe classrooms and record events "ethnographically"; that is, attempting to portray events from the points of view of the participants. Since the case also involves an analysis, reflection, and application section, students need to identify characteristics of this style of writing as well. In addition to the exemplars in the case book, the students are provided with specific instructions about writing the case:

1. Begin with your description of the case itself. Be sure to include whatever background information a reader might need to fully follow your case. Write the case in the first person. Case studies can be written about others, but the nature of this project is to provide you with some reflective practice experience. This case must be about you in some way. All names must be pseudonyms.

2. After you have completed a description of the events in the case, include a reflective analysis of the issue(s) utilizing resources from ALL your education course work and other relevant experiences. This is your opportunity to integrate learning from all your previous education courses.

3. Apply your experience and insights to future practice.

4. Choose a creative title to frame your case.

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5. Your case study is expected to be from 8 to 10 typed double spaced pages.

We have found that in most cases, students are already familiar with cases through some of their earlier education classes. For example, at one university students in an early field experience course are asked to write descriptions of "well remembered events." Later in their drama methods class they develop a case describing a class they have observed their mentor teach. These methods students generally find it easy to record what the teacher has said and done in class because they are experienced students and trained to take notes. Developing this case helps them also to also perceive and record other complex events in the classroom, events such as teacher-student and student-student interactions.

Data gathering--student teaching journal. Students are encouraged to keep a student teaching journal. This journal is important because it not only becomes a record of events for analysis later on, but it also helps students learn to "converse with oneself" (Richert, 1992a), an important part of developing teacher voice. For many, the journals become a way of, in the words of one student teacher, *"making notes on what I taught and ideas for what I might change the next time I teach this material."* As a part of data gathering, they are asked to make a daily list of their thoughts about how the day/week is going and to be concrete by providing specific examples. They continually reread their lists making notes of emerging themes or patterns finally choosing one that seems to be the most significant and beginning to write about it.

Choosing a topic. The topics of the cases reflect a variety of student teacher concerns and are often intensely personal. For example, cases can be written about a single incident or a single student reflecting either a struggle or a particularly defining moment with that student. Cases can also describe a series of events or struggles to understand one class or a struggle to teach one particular kind of lesson. Some cases are reflections on the whole student teaching experience. Although the student teachers were in drama classes in grades 7-12, their concerns are typical of student teachers in other settings. They are concerned first and foremost about classroom management, about their background in the subject being taught, how to evaluate that subject

maintaining both concern for standards and their students, and the degree to which they are permitted to develop their own voices in someone else's classroom.

Stage one of writing the case--telling the story. It is important in the case writing process that the students write in two stages. During the first stage, they try to faithfully depict as ethnographers all the details necessary for other readers to understand the case using pseudonyms. Usually their stories have already been discussed with others prior to writing the case. Students share their ideas for cases during student teacher seminars, in conversations with their supervisors and cooperating teachers, and sometimes with family and friends. These conversations about the subject of their cases are important because as Richert (1992a) puts it, "By giving voice to their experience, teachers speak their own truths" (p. 190). As they write, they are encouraged to include important contextual information, but it is also important that they avoid interpreting the behavior and attitudes of others. For example, the authors are advised to avoid making judgement statements, such as, "That student really hated me," and instead describe the behavior and words of the student including the author's reaction. We believe that allowing the student authors to paint themselves entirely as victim or hero in the cases serves only to reinforce the culture of school whereas student authors who learn to write about the bigger picture while still including their own feelings are more empowered and are more likely to develop the habit of reflection. This is perhaps the most important observation we have about the role the case writing process can have in the development of future drama teachers.

Stage two of writing the case--writing the reflection. In phase two of the writing process, the student authors need to take time to *"step back"* as one student put it and get some distance on the events in the case, especially since many of the cases are about subjects that involve the student teachers emotionally. Then they can clarify their responses, focus their thinking, and generate possible solutions (Richert, 1992b). When the student teachers analyze issues in their cases using both their own ideas and insights and education theory, they are more likely to achieve a sense of *praxis*. Finally, students who can apply their experience and insights to future practice, have a greater

sense of accomplishment and are more confident of their entry into the teaching profession. The student mentioned above went on to observe, *"When I reread the case, I realized the bigger picture and remembered why I'm a teacher."*

A Sample Case

The conversation about teaching and learning drama does not stop with the completion of the case. Many of the students give permission for their cases to become part of the collection of cases used in subsequent methods classes. It is telling that the students doubt whether their story will be interesting to other readers. One student, for instance, commented, *"I felt good about my case. I just don't know how someone else will feel about this, but it was good for me to write about it."*

While it is beyond the scope of this paper to describe all the cases collected thus far, an excerpt from one of the cases can prove useful. The case is entitled *"Eliminating the Creature, Embracing the Creature."* The student teacher is about to begin her first activity with a Drama 30 class, a Guided Imagery which would set up the students' creation of their own masks:

> *Colored. As I reached for the script from which I would read, I felt an onslaught of enormous color devour my chest, my hands and my mouth with an overwhelming sense of possibility. The script I held was that of a certain Guided Imagery I had created, an exercise in which the students would relax physically, listen to my voice and directions, and ultimately leave the real world behind for a few moments as they traveled on a journey of connection and spirit. My objective was to have them meet and interact with the person or 'thing' which might indeed become the mask they would make that Friday.*
>
> *As they entered the room I had the lights dimmed substantially, but had turned on the overhead machine with a blue gel to illuminate the room in a blue glow. In the background I had the gentle music of Enya playing, which added to the atmosphere of calm and peace I thought essential to the Guided Imagery. As the students found their own space and lay down, I noticed much movement and fidgeting, but as their bodies found rest through the breathing exercises, the transition into the actual Guided Imagery was a natural progression.*

I had been extremely careful to incorporate throughout the experience the idea of safety and student control. For example, at the beginning of the Imagery I had them first hovering in the room over the ground, then around the school, and finally rising above the school through a hole in the roof. I told them that they had complete control over how high they were above the ground at all times. I then had them soaring through the air to various places around the world: a desert, a mountain top, a huge city. However, I made it clear that the speed they were going was also entirely in their power. In so many ways I had trusted myself to eliminate any feelings of harm into which the scripting might push the students. But, just as important to me was expanding their freedom to explore numerous possibilities, and not restricting them in any way because of the words I was reading. This is when the creature emerged.

As they were exploring a fantastical environment, where no other man had ever been, I gave them the option of staying there or going back to a place they were more familiar with. Following this, I had them slowly encounter a person, or alien or CREATURE which they "instantly felt safe and secure with." Despite the safeguard included, the initial shock of hearing the word "creature," or even "alien" for some, destroyed the zone of security I had built around them. Some students saw dark figures; others referred to a feeling of apprehension. Either way I had charted a territory I was trying to stay away from.

During a breathtaking debriefing, my questions revealed some beautiful, even sacred, experiences for some of the students. One of them, for instance, told us about a glorious beach of blue crystal water, where the student met a 'creature' he recognized as elements of his own soul. This account lifted me; I thought, "I helped take him to a place of wonder and self-reflection." I was overjoyed as others shared their experiences - some swearing that the existence of the floor below them vanished as their only awareness was of their body.

Then the stories of darkness emerged. The pinpointed word was "creature" and I cursed myself, thinking, "Why wasn't that obvious to me? Why didn't I eliminate the creature?"

In particular, there was one young lady whom I will never forget. She remained for the

debriefing, but then quickly left. My cooperating teacher informed me that Rose had actually seen the face of her rapist, bringing up memories and hurt from two years ago. At that moment the color faded and I felt completely mixed. During the debriefing it was obvious I had assisted in nourishing many minds, but at the exact same time I had spread disease.

I instantly excused myself from the room and scoured the hallways until I found Rose. "I am so sorry . . . " were the words that fell from my mouth, and she instantly sank into my arms crying as I offered her a hug. I asked her if she wanted to talk about it, she said yes, so we did. Throughout these past eight weeks I can honestly say that during those next fifteen minutes, following that moment, I have never felt more like a teacher. Caring contributes to the nucleus of teaching, and on that day, sitting in an abandoned hallway, I made a most vital and caring connection that I will always see as the essence of teaching. How I had dreaded that word "creature;" how Rose had dreaded it; and yet together we were embracing it.

When we returned to the classroom to collect our things, I discreetly wrote my name and number on a piece of paper and gave it to her. Since she was new to the school, she felt a bit alienated, and as she was staying in a halfway house, a caring outside world seemed further away than she would have wished. She had access to many qualified counselors, and I encouraged her to use them as often as required. My cooperating teacher questioned my decision to give my phone number to Rose, but I honestly felt she needed the gracious act of me offering it to her more than she actually needed the number. I strongly believe that was the right thing to do.

The story told, the student teacher reflected on her discoveries, contemplating things she might do differently "next time":

Later, my brain raced with self-blame and regret. One of the most crucial and elemental pieces of instruction I had neglected to give my students prior to the Guided Imagery was the ***Right to Dissent!*** *Explaining to the class that if any emotional situations arose while they were in the process of the Guided Imagery, that they had the absolute right to remove themselves mentally or even physically from the room. This remained undone. It astounded me; it shocked*

me. I had forgotten the most critical safeguard required in an activity with such a potentially broad emotional base. The only possible reason I can think of which had me in such a blurred vision would be the nervous and exhilarating energy being pumped rapidly through my body. I was so ready to tackle the entire activity that I lost sight of the most significant element - the students, and their ultimate safety.

It is odd, but very true: no matter how much you think something through - making sure you eliminate factors X, Y, and Z but promote factors A, B, and C - there is a shift of gigantic proportions which occurs when you are actually in the classroom teaching. Moments in teaching make impacts in one thousand different ways. Guided Imagery does this in one million different ways. Even if the teacher cannot predict the shift, planning for as many diverse impacts as possible will truly be putting the student as top priority. This is especially essential when employing the use of Guided Imagery.

Insight, Epiphany, Permission to Dissent; Connecting with the students in one million different ways; Embracing the Creature that I somehow neglected to eliminate; and Rose. This was period two on my third day at the high school. This was my initiation into the pure essence of teaching.

The next section will consider how the cases are used in the methods class.

Using the Cases as a Teaching Tool

Approximately seventy cases have been collected over a three year period. Thirty-six of these cases were selected for the current draft of a case book, entitled Learning to Teach Drama: A Case Study Approach[1]. While each case does contain multiple issues, the cases have been organized to fit topics that might appear in a drama methods class. Some of the subject headings include the following: Planning and Presenting Lessons, The Process versus Product Dilemma, Knowing the Students, Working with Individuals, Working with Groups (Classroom Management), Drama in the

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[1] The students have given written permission for their cases to be included in this collection. The author's names are not used with the case, but a listing is included in the beginning of the book. The current collection contains cases and some commentaries written by methods students. We plan to solicit commentaries from cooperating teachers and other teacher educators, thus creating a conversation that connects pre-service and in-service drama education.

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School Curriculum, The Student Teaching Experience, and Starting Out.

The cases are discussed and analyzed in class focusing on such questions as (a) What are the central issues in the case? (b) What if anything could anyone do? (c) What did the teacher do? (d) How did this situation develop? What, if anything, might alter the basic conditions that created the present difficulties? (e) What, if anything, have you learned from this case? (Adapted from Kleinfield, 1992.) "Eliminating the Creature, Embracing the Creature" is included under a section entitled "Planning and Presenting Specific Types of Lessons" but could be used as a stimulus to discuss a variety of other issues as well.

Throughout the discussion, it is very important that the methods instructor keep the tone open and non-judgmental. Students are not only learning to listen to their own voices, but also to those of others. This means that methods students must respect the voice of the case authors and, more importantly, <u>try to understand them on their own terms</u> [emphasis added] (Richert, 1992a). During classroom discussions, students are encouraged to find as many issues in the case as relates to them personally. They look for a variety of solutions to problems and they are encouraged to disagree with one another. It is often in these disagreements that students begin to forge their own understandings. For example, a recent methods class explored the issues of drama as "dumping ground" described in a case entitled "Welcome Back, Mrs. C--Dealing with 'Sweat-Hogs'". This led them to consider who should or should not be in a drama course. The ensuing conversation introduced the concept of equity and whether "Sweat-hogs" deserved to take drama. While this conversation made many students uncomfortable, it did cause them to reconsider their own personal philosophies of drama education.

The methods students are then invited (or sometimes required, depending on the methods teacher) to write their own analytical response to some of the cases, applying what they learned from the case to their own future practice. The following are portions of a commentary written for "Eliminating the Creature, Embracing the Creature." The respondent began by reviewing the events in the case; then he begins to discuss what the student teacher noted as weaknesses in her lesson--her omission of a safe "out" for students in the exercise and her use of the word "creature" which had negative connotations for some students:

> *Not understanding that all students are in some way different from one another is a great oversight, especially when dealing with suppressed memories in the human mind. Also at issue is the presence or absence of an established safe environment for the students. Of course, these issues appear to be inter-related because if the environment had been created, the students would have had the opportunity to dissent at the introduction of the activity. This all goes back to an age old philosophy of teaching: Know Your Kids. In defense of the student teacher, I wonder if sufficient time for investigation was allowed. I would guess not. So then it becomes an issue*

of being unprepared for consequences. On the other hand, just how much can a teacher learn about a class, especially personal issues in a short period of time? Maybe professional judgment and careful selection of words had a lot more to do with this case than others.

Another issue that came to mind in this case is the question of just how involved should teachers become in the private circumstances of students? It was a judgment call on the part of the student teacher to not only apologize to the student, but to also give her home telephone number and offer further assistance. Maybe a teacher would not always take this course of action, but in this case, since the student was new to the school and staying in a halfway house, I consider it very good judgment and even more than good judgment--honest caring and human compassion.

The writer goes on to relate this case to his own experience and preparation to student teach: *This particular case seemed to touch me personally and professionally. I identified strongly with the student and teacher. Looking ahead to student teaching and beyond, I can clearly see a need to establish that anxiety free environment for all students from the very start. There should be no questions in the minds of the class before any and all activities are allowed to commence. I definitely plan to structure my classrooms as such. I will also stress the importance of a clear understanding and all questions regarding confusion or concern will be addressed, the only stupid question is the one that isn't asked, so to speak.*

It is important to remember that we are all fallible human beings, capable of great strides in education as well as severe set-backs. I admire the fact that the student teacher admitted an error in judgment and sought to correct it. But more than the immediate result, reached out to make a difference toward the long range goal of being human and caring from the heart.

Advantages of Case Study Methodology

We have found three distinct advantages in this process so far:

First, campus discussions on the practice of teaching are situated within the context the student teachers are about to face. The examples used are deemed relevant as they are the real stories of people who have recently been in similar situations; the cases are perceived as "authentic voices" from the field. As one methods student commented, "*[The case book] gave us real situations and it helped us foresee some of the problems we might encounter when we start student teaching. It also forced us to search for possible solutions. . .*" Students report that, as they read the cases, they try to think what they would do in the same situation. Furthermore, discussion of the cases enables preservice teachers to debate classroom practices in a collegial manner and to learn vicariously through the experiences of others. As one methods student noted, "*That could have been me. What would I have done differently in the same situation.*"

Second, the cases provide examples of reflective practice which the new student teachers can

emulate as they write case studies during their own field experience. The collection of cases provides them with a variety of possible forms and content. Learning to reflect through the writing of case study narratives becomes a collaborative venture as the students come to understand that not only is it a valuable tool for themselves, but that reflective practice has value for others.

Third, we have found that we have personally benefitted from our conversations with each other about this project. As we have talked about how we use the cases and what we have learned from them, we have discovered that we are not only learning from each other, but also connecting with each other. We are finding our own voices as drama educators; it is not only the classroom drama teacher who can feel isolated! We hope that when these cases are shared with other drama educators in other institutions and with cooperating teachers the conversation will broaden as all the participants seek to know more about teaching and learning drama.

While we have found this case study project to be a significant educational tool, it is the students themselves who wrote cases and responses who attest to the usefulness of this strategy. The comment below illustrates:

> *Commenting on the cases helped to confirm that I do know how to teach drama. Knowing that I am capable of diagnosing a problem and thinking of a possible solution helps to boost my confidence in my own teaching abilities. I now realize the importance of recognizing potential problems as soon as possible and dealing with them as effectively as possible because the consequences of making the wrong decisions can cause a lot of anxiety to all parties involved. What I found most interesting about the case studies was how confident most of the student teachers were when they first walked into their classrooms and how that changed when they were faced with the real test--teaching the students.*

Above all, many students were grateful for the opportunity to read cases by students who came before them and considered these stepping stones to practice as "gifts" to ease their entry into the profession. They were more than willing to do the same for those who would follow. As one pre-service teacher noted:

> *Responding to case studies changes the dynamics of the methods class. Instead of being students, we are teachers, analyzing and problem solving with our colleagues: those of us who write about their classroom experience and those of us who respond to these experiences. Just responding to a case study gave me a sense of community with my fellow student teachers. I will learn from their cases and they will learn from mine.*

Problematic Issues

We have also found some problems in the case writing process. The most significant of these is time--many of the student teachers feel enormous constraints on their time and energy during their practicum without the additional pressure of a case study requirement. This can affect student

motivation. While some students embrace the idea that they are writing their case for a potential world wide audience, others resent their professor's efforts to create a text from their writings. In situations where the student teachers have the opportunity to submit a rough draft of the case first for feedback the chances for a well-written case increase.

Time is also a factor with the use of the cases in the methods class. Sometimes it is difficult to make time to discuss the cases in class. Students sometimes do not have or do not take the time to read the cases carefully enough ahead of time to have a thoughtful discussion; furthermore, it takes classroom time to thoroughly explore all the issues in the case. As a result, comments can be made based on snap judgements and quick readings of the cases. When this occurs, students do not have the opportunity to practice reflection and tend to rely on first impressions. One methods student noted that it would probably be a good strategy to have student regularly write reflections on the cases because "*it ensures that we read the text*"!

Some students report that they simply do not like reading cases, while others note that they find these particular cases often incomplete, missing important contextual information, as one student noted, "*There were isolated cases in the collection which I enjoyed reading and got a lot of information from. But others were so vague and repetitive and poorly written that they harshly contrasted with the rest. It did not have a unified tone or a collective 'feel' to it.*" There is some evidence to suggest, however, that a students' reaction to the use of cases in the methods class can predict that student's success during student teaching. Methods students who regularly report not finding the cases useful seem to have difficulty later in student teaching planning and implementing lessons and making effective use of class time. Consequently, these students also experience more classroom management problems and they are less likely to "take direction" from their cooperating teacher and university supervisor. It is possible that a student who has trouble visualizing the events in a case and cannot or will not project himself/herself into that same situation, will also have trouble visualizing in advance a lesson or series of lessons as it is planned and later implemented in the classroom. It is likely that these problems are a result of both perceptual weaknesses in the student teacher and low motivation to plan according to accepted educational practice.

The fact that the students do not know the authors of the cases can also be both blessing and curse. On the one hand, students can discuss freely the issues in the case with a sense of detachment, but on the other hand, they can also lose a sense of empathy for the people in the case because they do not see real faces behind the words in the case. The burden is on the methods professor to promote a professional tone in the discussion of the cases. When time permits, it can be an effective strategy for methods students to role play the characters in the cases, thus coming to see the participants as an actor sees a character from the "given circumstances" in the case.

Despite these drawbacks, we have found that the case study and case writing processes are

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valuable components of drama teacher preparation and are contributing to our own understanding of the important issues in drama education. Furthermore, we feel that the students benefit enormously from the experience as Atkinson (1995) notes:

> The whole process of psychological development focuses on a dialectic of conflict and resolution, change and growth. To achieve what we are capable of, we need continually to take in and make sense of what we experience. Telling our stories brings order to our experience, and helps us to view our lives both subjectively and objectively at the same time. . . . The more we reflect upon our experiences, the more we understand who we are. (pp 6-7)

The authors welcome the participation of other teacher educators and interested parties in this project. Copies of the current draft of the case book can be obtained from Laura A. McCammon, Dept. of Theatre Arts, P.O. Box 210003, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ 85721-0003 USA or mccammon@u.arizona.edu

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